

ISLAM

True worship is a divine dance

By Maulana Wahiduddin Khan

To Nilma Devi, an Indian dancer, dancing is a divine art. So deeply involved is she in her art that she feels unable to fully express herself in her act, powerless to reproduce—in the form of restricted bodily movements—the feeling of total abandon that a dancer seeks to convey. As she said in an interview to *The Hindustan Times*, “The dance starts where the gymnastics ends.” To her, dancing is not a profession, it is a way of life. She feels empty as if there is no aim in her life, when not dancing.

Such dedication to a “way of life” can also be called worship. A dancer’s dedication to her art creates feelings of the greatest profundity within her. Dancing becomes for her a way of life.

She feels how inadequate the dance forms are when it comes to expressing the tumult of her inner emotions. She fails to express herself fully in the way she wants to. She feels empty when not dancing.

There appears to her to be no point in life without dancing—nothing to which she can relate.

The same is true of worship of God. True worship is a divine dance, for it comes from discovery of God—an event of such immense proportions that it makes one dance.

The state of mind of one making such a discovery is just like that of the dancer devoted to her art: God becomes the focal point in his life; he has no life of his own when separated from God; so deep are his feelings for his Lord that he cannot find words to adequately convey them.

Devotion to and worship of God are not mere blind beliefs which have no effect in the life of a believer. True discovery and realisation of God Almighty are visible in a believer’s entire life—animating his thoughts, actions and speech.